

# Delaware Events to Mark World AIDS Day Dec. 1, 2018

**DOVER (Nov. 29, 2018)** – December 1, 2018, marks the 30th annual World AIDS Day. For three decades, this day has united people around the world in the fight against Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and AIDS. World AIDS Day encourages support for those living with HIV and remembrance for those who have died of AIDS-related illnesses. HIV continues to have a significant effect on Delaware's population. There are approximately 3,520 individuals living with HIV/AIDS in Delaware – a state with less than 1 million people. While HIV is declining overall in the United States, an estimated 1.1 million people are living with HIV, and one in seven don't know it.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that everyone in the United States aged 13-64 get tested at least once as part of routine medical care. People at high risk for HIV should get tested at least once a year. Knowing your HIV status gives you powerful information to help you take steps to keep you and your partner healthy.

Over the years, there have been significant advances in the treatment of HIV. Antiretroviral medications, when taken as prescribed, can reduce the virus to undetectable levels in the blood. Recent research has shown that those with undetectable levels of HIV in their blood are at very low risk of transmitting HIV sexually. Antiretrovirals can also reduce the risk of HIV-negative people becoming infected when taken as "Pre-exposure Prophylaxis" or PrEP. PrEP is taken daily to reduce the risk of acquiring HIV.

It is clear that HIV treatment now enables people to live long, healthy and fulfilling lives. While these accomplishments should be recognized and celebrated, stigma

and discrimination remain pervasive in the lives of those affected by HIV/AIDS. The harmful effects of stigma and discrimination impact the emotional well-being and mental health of those infected, as well as hinder testing, treatment and other prevention efforts for those not aware of their status. Fear of stigma may prevent an HIV-positive individual from obtaining the essential medical care that he or she needs and those at risk from seeking testing. Fighting HIV-related stigma and discrimination is as important as ever.

On World AIDS Day, it is important to also remember those who have died from the illness – approximately 2,400 Delawareans since 1981.

It is critical that we remember and honor those who fought the courageous battle against AIDS and carry their legacy with us, not only as we make additional advances in treatment, but also as we continue to fight the stigma and discrimination related to living with HIV/AIDS.

The following events are being held to mark World AIDS Day 2018 in Delaware:

### **New Castle County**

World AIDS Day Summit

Presented by AIDS Delaware, Brandywine Counseling and Community Services, Duffy's HOPE and Janssen

Dec. 1, 2018, 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Delaware Technical Community College, 300 N. Orange St.,  
Wilmington

Contact: Frank Hawkins, 302-652-6776

An educational awareness event consisting of exhibitors and a panel of individuals living with HIV and those who have been affected by HIV. Free and confidential HIV testing will be available.

### **Outreach and Testing Events**

Beautiful Gate Outreach Center (BGOC)

Nov. 30, 2018, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

BGOC office, 604 N. Walnut St., Wilmington

Contact: Suzanne Tait, 302-472-3002, [suzannebgoc@aol.com](mailto:suzannebgoc@aol.com)

A special outreach and testing event at the BGOC office. Random door prizes will be given to those who have never been tested.

### **Kent County**

Free confidential HIV testing

Brandywine Counseling and Community Services (BCCS)

Dec. 1, 2018, 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

John Wesley Community Center, 217 West Division St., Dover

Contact: Lynn Fahey, (302) 225-9269

BCCS will provide information, support and free confidential HIV testing. The event is open to the public. This year's theme is "Know your status."

### **Sussex County**

The Rehoboth Beach Candlelight Walk and Service of Remembrance and Hope

Camp Rehoboth

Dec. 1, 2018, 6:15 p.m.

The walk starts at the Rehoboth Bandstand and the Service of Remembrance and Hope is at All Saints' Episcopal Church on 18 Olive Ave.

Contact: Salvatore Seeley, 302-227-5620, [salvatoreseeley@aol.com](mailto:salvatoreseeley@aol.com)

A candlelight vigil and walk, followed by a Service of Remembrance and Hope, including a reading of the names of those lost to AIDS. The walk begins at 6:30 p.m. and the Service of Remembrance and Hope begins at 7:00 p.m., followed by a light supper.

For more information about World AIDS Day, visit <https://www.worldaidsday.org/>. For more information about HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment services in Delaware, visit <https://www.dhss.delaware.gov/dph/dpc/hivaidsprogram.html>.

*A person who is deaf, hard-of-hearing, deaf-blind or speech-disabled can call the DPH phone number above by using TTY services. Dial 7-1-1 or 800-232-5460 to type your conversation to a relay operator, who reads your conversation to a hearing person at DPH. The relay operator types the hearing person's spoken words back to the TTY user. To learn more about TTY availability in Delaware, visit <http://delawarerelay.com>.*

The Department of Health and Social Services is committed to improving the quality of the lives of Delaware's citizens by promoting health and well-being, fostering self-sufficiency, and protecting vulnerable populations. DPH, a division of DHSS, urges Delawareans to make healthier choices with the 5-2-1 Almost None campaign: eat 5 or more fruits and vegetables each day, have no more than 2 hours of recreational screen time each day (includes TV, computer, gaming), get 1 or more hours of physical activity each day, and drink almost no sugary beverages.